



February 3, 2010

Dear Senator,

On behalf of our millions of members and supporters across the country, we are writing to express our support for Senator Bernard Sanders' "10 Million Solar Roofs and 10 Million Gallons of Solar Water Heating Act of 2010" and to request your co-sponsorship and further support of the bill.

In order to ensure the transition to a clean energy economy treads lightly on our treasured landscapes, construction of renewable energy facilities must strike a balance between the preservation of sensitive wildlands and wildlife habitat and the urgent need for renewable energy as a means to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and significantly curtail the country's greenhouse gas emissions.

One of the most straightforward ways to both protect our nation's iconic places and quickly deploy renewable energy technologies is to maximize the country's use of the built environment for small-scale, distributed electricity generation. Constructing generation, such as solar rooftops and solar hot water heaters, on existing buildings and other structures minimizes the amount of land, often otherwise undisturbed, required for both fossil and renewable utility-scale power plants. Additionally, rooftop solar energy and hot water heating do not require the costly construction and maintenance of electric transmission lines, nor the associated energy losses. It is necessary that the built environment be prioritized wherever possible for the siting of energy generation and distribution.

While we support properly-sited large-scale renewable energy facilities such as wind farms and solar plants, distributed generation is an important immediate step towards ensuring that our nation's precious landscapes are preserved as we move quickly towards a clean energy future. We believe Senator Sanders' bill is a timely effort to achieve significant growth in nationwide distributed electricity generation.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Mary Beth Beetham
Director of Legislative Affairs
Defenders of Wildlife

David Moulton
Director, Climate Policy & Conservation Funding
The Wilderness Society